

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 26

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 31

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 26—Relative to World Languages and Cultures Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State April 30, 2007.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 26, Yee. Language education: World Languages and Cultures Month. This measure would declare the month of May 2007 to be World Languages and Cultures Month.

WHEREAS, In 2006, under the direction of the President of the United States, the United States Department of Education, the United States Department of State, the United States Department of Defense, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence collaborated to establish the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI); and

WHEREAS, The NSLI is designed to dramatically increase the number of Americans learning critical need languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, Farsi, and other languages, through new and expanded programs for kindergarten through university and into the workforce; and

WHEREAS, In order to meet the mission of the NSLI, Americans must be able to communicate in other languages, a challenge most California educational agencies are totally unprepared to meet; and

WHEREAS, The President of the United States in 2006 proposed the American Competitiveness Initiative to ensure that our students develop the 21st century skills they need to compete and thrive in the competitive global economy; and

WHEREAS, The United States Secretary of Education, in her Statement on International Education Week 2006, declared that “Technology has leveled the playing field and flattened the world ... and has illustrated the importance of foreign languages in communicating and forming partnerships with citizens from other cultures and countries”; and

WHEREAS, The Committee for Economic Development (CED) issued a report in 2006 entitled “Education for Global Leadership: The Importance of International Studies and Foreign Language Education for U.S. Economic and National Security”; and

WHEREAS, The CED report recommends the expansion of foreign language programs at every level of education to address the paucity of Americans fluent in foreign languages, especially critical, less-commonly taught languages; and

WHEREAS, California, due to its rich heritage of linguistic and cultural resources, is uniquely poised to play a leadership role in advancing the

various national and state initiatives to expand the teaching and learning of foreign languages; and

WHEREAS, Proficiency in more than one language enhances communication and strengthens positive interactions among people in the United States and around the world; and

WHEREAS, The study of languages improves the academic and literacy skills of pupils, leading to increased levels of achievement on verbal and quantitative examinations; and

WHEREAS, The study of languages and cultures provides pupils with the opportunity to gain insight into the history, heritage, and perspectives of all California residents and of residents of other communities around the world; and

WHEREAS, The conditions of the current international economy require that people be able to interact effectively with individuals from different cultural backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Linguistic and cultural competence is critical to the security needs of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The study of languages and cultures increases understanding of, and encourages respect for, people of different backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, California language organizations are participating in a 10-year Discover Languages, Discover the World! campaign sponsored by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages to increase public awareness in the United States of the importance of providing educational instruction in languages and cultures; and

WHEREAS, During the month of May 2007 the California Language Teachers' Association, the California Foreign Language Project, the University of California Consortium for Language Learning and Teaching, and other educational organizations throughout California will sponsor special activities to promote awareness of the importance of California residents being able to interact successfully in multilingual and multicultural contexts in the United States and around the world; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby proclaims the month of May 2007, as World Languages and Cultures Month, during which time the Legislature encourages all educational communities in California to celebrate languages and cultures with appropriate pupil activities and programs that promote an understanding of the diversity of languages and cultures in California and the benefit that they represent to our nation, and urges all residents to become interested in and give full support to quality language and cultural programs for all pupils in California schools; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.